

Congress is whether we are going to stand with them in solidarity or whether we will turn away our heads. This amendment would provide \$75 million in funds, the amount requested by the administration; in fact, announced by Secretary of State Rice. That announcement, I know from sources I have, was broadly heard and appreciated within the Iranian civil society dissident movement. The committee has recommended one-third of that amount of money. This \$75 million would go to labor activists, women's groups, journalists, human rights advocates, and other members of Iranian civil society. It provides Congress an opportunity to demonstrate that even as we condemn the behavior of the Iranian regime, we stand with the Iranian people, a people with a proud history who truly are, in my opinion, yearning to be free. That freedom is suppressed by the fanatical regime that dominates their lives today.

The alternative path before Congress, if we don't adopt this amendment, would be to cut the administration's request by two-thirds. At that level of funding, existing programs will not only be unable to expand, they will actually be cut back. In other words, at just the moment when the Iranian Government is engaged in an unprecedented rollback of the human rights and political freedoms of the Iranian people, the American Government will be rolling back its own programs to help defend those rights and freedoms. Why would we do this?

The report language of the Appropriations subcommittee, I say respectfully, says that "the Committee supports the goals of promoting democracy in Iran," but "it is particularly concerned that grantees suspected of receiving U.S. assistance have been harassed and arrested by the Government of Iran for their pro-democracy activities."

I ask unanimous consent to be given another 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. In other words, the argument against this amendment seems to be that we should give less to help dissidents in Iran because our help, in turn, may lead to their harassment by the totalitarian government in Tehran. I respectfully disagree with this logic. I know that we do not give less to democracy advocates in Myanmar or Zimbabwe or Belarus when they are being harassed by the regime, nor do we give less to freedom fighters behind the Iron Curtain in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. On the contrary, it is precisely when dissidents are under attack that they need more help from the United States, not less. I am sure my colleagues would agree that if we give less money to these civil society human rights activists in Iran, the Iranian regime will not repress them any less. The repression probably, in fact, will be greater. As to the argument that those who accept

this money—and I can say, speaking generally, that the money is given through third parties, international organizations, to the civil society human rights advocates in Iran—that somehow they will be harassed for receiving this money, I believe the just and right thing to do is leave that decision to those who are fighting for freedom in Iran, for us to be willing to help them if they want that help. The record is clear there.

Since the State Department began making these grants 8 months ago, 90 percent of the fiscal year 2006 funds have been obligated, with the remaining funds expected to be obligated by mid-September. Perhaps there are some Iranian groups that do not want our funding, but it is clear that many others do. The need is great. It is beyond the \$75 million this amendment would provide. That choice should be theirs. Our moral responsibility is to make the money available to these courageous fighters for freedom in Iran, those who want not only more freedom but a better future for themselves and their children.

I want to close by saying that we know from history that dissidents can change history, because history is made not by abstract, inexorable forces but by individual human beings such as Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa or Andrei Sakharov or Natan Sharansky. It was the bravery of these people that kindled our moral imagination to see the suffering of millions behind the Iron Curtain, and it was their leadership that inspired millions more to cast off their shackles and overthrow a cruel and dictatorial system of Communist government that many thought would endure forever. Like the Communist terrorists of eastern Europe, the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran repress their people because they are frightened of them. They know how powerful the dissidents and the democrats in their midst can become. These are the people to whom this money would go. That is the reason my colleagues and I have offered this amendment.

I ask all Members of the Senate to support it, and I thank the Chair.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I take great pride now in asking unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for 2 minutes so we may greet five Parliamentarians from the Republic of Slovenia. I take great pride in this. As the occupant of the Chair

knows, my mother came from the small village of Suha in Slovenia, was an immigrant to this country. I know the grandfather of the Senator from Minnesota also came from Slovenia. So for those of us with Slovenian roots, this is a proud moment. In its 16 years of independence, Slovenia has established a stable multiparty democracy, a free press, an independent judiciary, and an excellent human rights record. In 2004, Slovenia joined NATO and became a member of the European Union. In fact, in January of 2008, Slovenia will ascend to the presidency of the European Union.

So we are proud to have five members of the Slovenian Parliament here: Miro Petek, Marijan Pojbic, Jozef Horvat, Samo Bevk, and Marjan Drofenik.

RECESS

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for 2 minutes to greet these fine Parliamentarians.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:45 p.m., recessed until 4:47 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. KLOBUCHAR).

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on the Lieberman amendment for up to 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2691

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, this is the Lieberman-Brownback amendment; and several others are on the amendment as well. I have worked on this issue for some period of time. Over the past 4 years, we have been able to get some funding for democracy-building activity inside of Iran. It has been a difficult project. We have not been able to get much money secured, but it follows a long tradition of successful efforts at targeting regimes that do not support democracy, that undermine democracy, indeed, even support terrorism around the world, by building civil society organizations within that country.

It is very interesting to me you can get a message into Iran, and there is a good possibility, there is an excellent prospect of building civil society organizations inside Iran. You can look at some of the things that have taken place recently where there has been a bus driver strike and the possibility of a labor union movement forming there or even with some of the teacher strikes or some of the student strikes.

You are clearly seeing the people inside Iran are opposed to the regime. We